

VZCZCXRO4151
RR RUEHAG RUEHDF RUEHLZ
DE RUEHRL #1574/01 3451929
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 111929Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6040
INFO RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUCNFRG/FRG COLLECTIVE
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 1818
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0538
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1056
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2561
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1583
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 0746
RHMFIUU/HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE//J5 DIRECTORATE (MC)//
RHMFISS/CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE
RUKAAKC/UDITDUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BERLIN 001574

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/PAPD, EUR/PPA, EUR/CE, INR/EUC, INR/P,
SECDEF FOR USDP/ISA/DSAA, DIA FOR DC-4A

VIENNA FOR CSBM, CSCE, PAA

"PERISHABLE INFORMATION -- DO NOT SERVICE"

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [NO](#) [DA](#) [KGHG](#) [UK](#) [FR](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: Nobel Peace Prize, COP15, Finance;BERLIN

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary
- [1](#)2. Nobel Peace Prize
- [1](#)3. Climate Change
- [1](#)4. Levy on Bonuses

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories

Almost all major media led with stories on the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. Newspaper headlines included: QObama: war is sometimes necessaryQ (Frankfurter Rundschau, Tagesspiegel, Berliner Zeitung), QObama defends AmericaQs WarsQ (Sueddeutsche), QObama: war is part of mankindQ (Die Welt). Frankfurter Allgemeine led with a report on the KSK special forcesQ involvement in the September 4 airstrikes near Kunduz. Handelsblatt, FT Deutschland and Tageszeitung led with stories on climate change. Editorials focused on President ObamaQs Nobel Peace Prize speech.

- [1](#)2. Nobel Peace Prize

ARD-TVQs Tagesthemen commented: QOf course, he could have said I donQt accept the prize because I did not earn it, at least not yet.

However, Obama is great precisely because he admits such contradictions. This openness was amazing when he admitted that he did not know what to do with Guantanamo inmates. He was not talking as a politician, but a moralist. Those who now warn again against the smooth-talker Obama, as if this were the opposite of serious policy decisions, should check whether they still have the Weizsdcker speech on their shelves, of which we were so proud of at the time. When the moralist Obama banned torture, which some of us already approvingly described as interrogation methods, he did that against the majority opinion in America. Obama is therefore credible. Maybe he has not yet earned the prize, but we can grant him that premature praise.

Deutschlandfunk radio had this to say: QIn front of the world, the American President was forced to resolve the apparent contraction between his role as commander-in-chief and peacemaker. He has done thatQas alwaysQwith an excellent speech, plain language and honest words. Those who watched Obama over the last three months know how

difficult the decision on Afghanistan was. Torn between ideals and realism, he chose the politically more uncomfortable and risky option of increasing the troops. Although he referred to Martin Luther King, and many see him as his political heir, Obama noted that he could not be guided by him alone. And he is right. The catastrophic derailments of the last eight years under President Bush do not change anything about the reason for defeating al Qaida... Obama is a President in times of war, and spoke as such in Oslo. No diplomacy is helpful in the fight against blind extremists, and a war against them does not necessarily create peace. A Nobel Peace Prize is not a guarantee of success, but as in the case of Willy Brandt it honors further efforts. What a wonderfully modest claim.

Frankfurter Allgemeine wrote in a front-page editorial that President Obama's speech was sobering, adding: There was little talk of visions for a new, peaceful world; however, there was much talk about the dilemmas of practical political actions which have caught up with Obama, like Afghanistan. At the moment the Oslo committee awarded him this prize, it must have dawned on him that it was a burden rather than a reward. It is a check for the future, which might not be covered. Behind it is the clear attempt to put America's foreign policy under moral pressure to push it into a direction that the five ladies and gents of the Oslo committee prefer. They will have been disappointed about a few statements Obama made, such as the one of the hard truth. In the Oslo town hall, a President spoke who realized in his first months in office that reconciliatory gestures and friendly worlds do not change the world. Being the most powerful man in the world also means making difficult and unpopular decisions.

BERLIN 00001574 002 OF 003

Sueddeutsche editorialized: In Oslo, Barack Obama delivered a partly annoying speech. Of all days, on the day of accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, Obama justified war. Even the short part of the speech dedicated to peace dealt foremost with the question of what prevents the world from being more peaceful, not so much with how we can create peace. There are two important reasons against the decision of the Oslo committee. Obama is still a President of hope, not of success. The hope, however, is diminishing. His words hint at a better world, but his results are of this world. The Nobel Prize is more of an incentive, than a reward. For many Europeans the prize is also an anti-Bush award. Secondly, Obama is also a wartime President. He has inherited Iraq and Afghanistan from George W. Bush. In Afghanistan, he is not reducing the engagement, but he is escalating the situation by sending in more troops.

Die Welt opined in a front-page editorial: Yesterday, the rhetorically gifted Barack Obama delivered his first great speech, a speech that might become part of the world's small historic wealth of outstanding addresses. We wondered for a while whether the dreamer Obama would get down to earth and whether he would survive this hard landing unhurt. Yesterday, he showed that he has arrived, stood the test, and that his universal American dream was not damaged. He made very clear why it can be necessary in the interest of peace and humanity to wage wars. Neither was he too shy to speak as an American patriot. Universalism is our fate and duty, he said. The principles we believe in are so strong that we cannot accept it if they are trampled on elsewhere. Similar to his predecessor, Obama has delivered a speech in favor of the free world's mission.

Bild opined: If there was a Nobel Prize for the best and most moving speech, Obama would be a great candidate. However, he was given the Nobel Peace Prize. Why? He was elected only a year ago, and has not yet achieved anything substantial in this complicated world. How could he? The Nobel Prize committee made crazy twists yesterday to justify the choice. That's ridiculous. The truth is that Barack Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize because Europeans are glad to be finally rid of George W. Bush.

Tagesspiegel favorably remarked in a front-page editorial: Since his speech, we can understand why the decision of the Committee was not wrong, because the American President did not even try to

pretend that he is a peacemaker. He explained to his audience and the world why wars are sometimes inevitable to establish justice or put a stop to incredible injustice. Obama inherited two wars from Bush which are a gruesome burden for his country. However, he is also trying to resolve this legacy. You can believe it is illusionary when he speaks of the divine spark that is in all of us.

However, it is particularly his belief in the good of the people, the victorious power of the truth and the superiority of freedom and human rights that have brought Obama into office and have made him represent hope for people throughout the world. This Nobel Peace Prize also expresses hope for a better future. Obama's dream of a better world was rewarded. The world has not too many, but too few of these courage boosters.

Under the headline 'Wrong prize at the wrong time,' Spiegel Online led with an unfavorable commentary by Washington correspondent Gabor Steingart saying: 'Giving the Nobel Peace Prize to Barack Obama could turn out to be an historic error. Others deserve this prize more, first and foremost the unlikely trio of Gerhard Schroeder, Vladimir Putin and Jacques Chirac. The Social Democratic chancellor of Germany, the conservative French president and the new czar of Russia assembled a much-mocked coalition against the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. They based their rejection on the paucity of evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. No war without good reason, they argued. The anti-war stance of Chirac,

BERLIN 00001574 003 OF 003

Putin and Schroeder wasn't effective at the time. It seemed hopeless. It was extremely risky. But the trio was, in hindsight, correct nonetheless. The Nobel Prize was, in its better days, always this: a medal for those who took the difficult path.

13. Climate Change

Under the headline 'Politicized Scientists,' Frankfurter Allgemeine commented in a front-page editorial on environmental research: 'There is a reason why the spheres of politics and science are strictly divided. Politicians have a mandate and scientists must research independently. Climate researchers can only remain credible if they re-establish their distance to politicians, which some of their protagonists have obviously lost.'

Sueddeutsche noted in an editorial: 'Germany is not just pursuing ambitious goals in the fight against climate change because the country loves nature: if the world reaches an agreement in Copenhagen to radically reduce greenhouse gases, many countries would have to rely on innovative green technology, which they are then supposed to buy in Germany. Climate protection would ultimately strengthen the German economy.'

FT Deutschland editorialized on its front page: 'The fact that there is fraud in the trade of CO2 emission rights has no influence on the climate. Trading CO2 rights can be an effective means to protect the climate if greenhouse gases have a price tag. However, the fraud over billions of euros is more than just a financial burden for Europe. It is a boost to those who are skeptical about trading emissions anyway. And it makes fools out of Europeans, who see themselves as pioneers in the fight against climate change.'

14. Levy on Bonuses

Under the headline 'Punitive Levy,' Sueddeutsche editorialized: 'You think there could be nothing new in this world, and then you are surprised: a punitive tax of 50 percent on all bonus payments in Britain—that's something. The greed of some bankers is unbearable.'

It is known that generous bonuses provoked incredible risks. The fact that some of the banks that have just been rescued by the state continue their policies as if nothing has happened is outrageous.

FT Deutschland opined: 'The basic idea of the levy is not so bad. Given that many believe that the problem is that banks are again paying generous bonuses, while they have not yet accumulated sufficient capital to be seen as healthy, the plan to give banks the option to pay high bonuses or to put more money aside is

reasonable. The problem is: it is only supposed to apply to bonuses that are to be paid by April 5, 2010.

MURPHY